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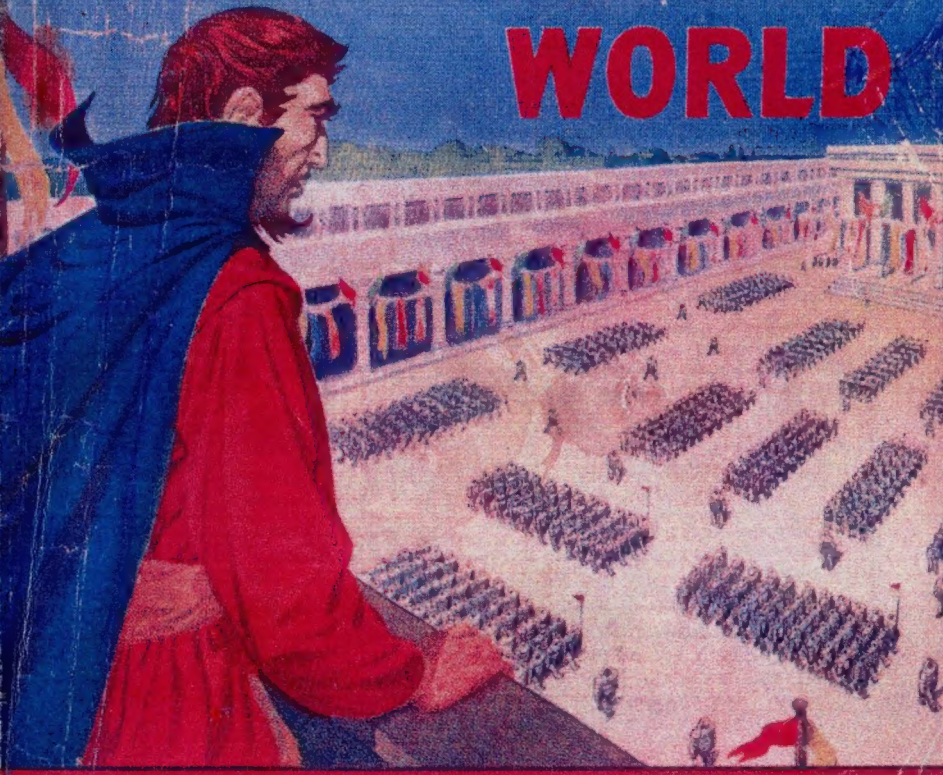
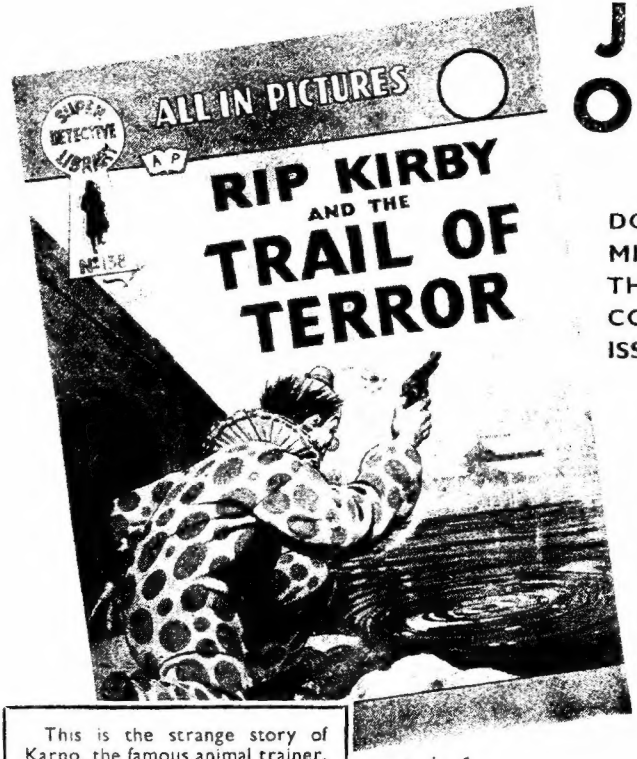
RICK RANDOM

AND THE MYSTERY OF THE

ROBOT WORLD





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64 Action-Packed Picture Pages!

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AND DON'T FORGET TO ORDER NEXT MONTH'S TWO EXCITING ISSUES!

RICK RANDOM *and the* MYSTERY OF THE ROBOT WORLD

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REMEMBER — WHATEVER YOU SAY, MAY BE USED IN EVIDENCE AGAINST YOU. YOU WON'T DENY LEAVING THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE A FEW MINUTES AGO ?
OF COURSE NOT -- WHAT ARE YOU GETTING AT ?

OUR ILLUSTRIOUS PRIME MINISTER WAS FOUND STABBED TO DEATH A FEW MINUTES AFTER YOU LEFT HIS ROOM. YOU ARE CHARGED WITH HIS MURDER !

ONE OF THE PEOPLE WHO SAW THE ARREST WAS A REPORTER FROM THE GALACTIC NEWS SERVICE....
THAT WAS THE AMBASSADOR FROM EARTH THEY ARRESTED. I MUST GET TO A VISI-PHONE FAST !

THE NEWS WAS FLASHED FROM ARCADIA AND SOON REACHED THE INTERPLANETARY BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION ON EARTH—WHERE IT CAME TO THE ATTENTION OF RICK RANDOM, FIRST DETECTIVE OF THE SPACE AGE.
BAD NEWS FROM ARCADIA?
IT COULDN'T BE WORSE -- ARCADIA HAS BEEN SPOILING FOR TROUBLE WITH EARTH FOR SOME TIME, I MUST SEE MARIUS FISHER AT ONCE !

A PRIVATE GRAV-CHUTE TOOK RICK TO THE OFFICE OF HIS GREAT FRIEND, DR MARVIN FISHER -- CHAIRMAN OF THE INTERPLANETARY BOARD...
SOMEONE IN ARCADIA WANTS TROUBLE. I THINK THIS MURDER WAS ARRANGED TO UNITE THE PEOPLE AGAINST EARTH!
YOU'RE RIGHT RICK... I CANNOT BELIEVE OUR AMBASSADOR KILLED THE PRIME MINISTER.

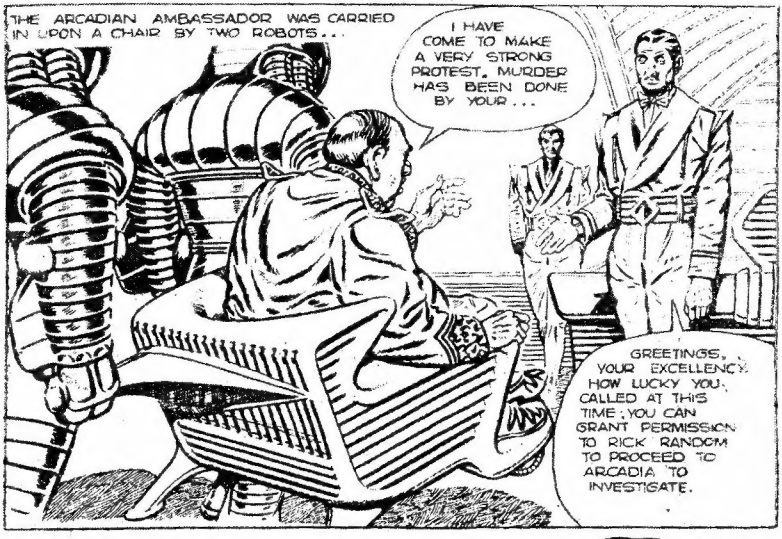
THE WHOLE THING IS A FRAME-UP, BUT THE ARCADIANS DON'T KNOW THAT, AND THIS MURDER IS JUST THE KIND OF EXCUSE THE WAR PARTY NEEDS.

ARCADIA IS UNIQUE IN THE GALAXY -- A PLANET WHERE THE ROBOTS OUTNUMBER PEOPLE BY THOUSANDS TO ONE. EVERY MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD LIVES WITH MORE LUXURY -- AND SERVANTS THAN DID A ROMAN EMPEROR.
YOU WOULD THINK THAT WOULD BE ENOUGH TO KEEP THEM CONTENT.

MOST OF THEM ARE -- BUT A RECKLESS MINORITY FEELS DIFFERENTLY. THE WAR PARTY, AND THEIR LEADER, GEHRA, WANT TO START A WAR THAT WILL DESTROY EARTH, AND LEAVE ARCADIA SUPREME IN THE GALAXY.

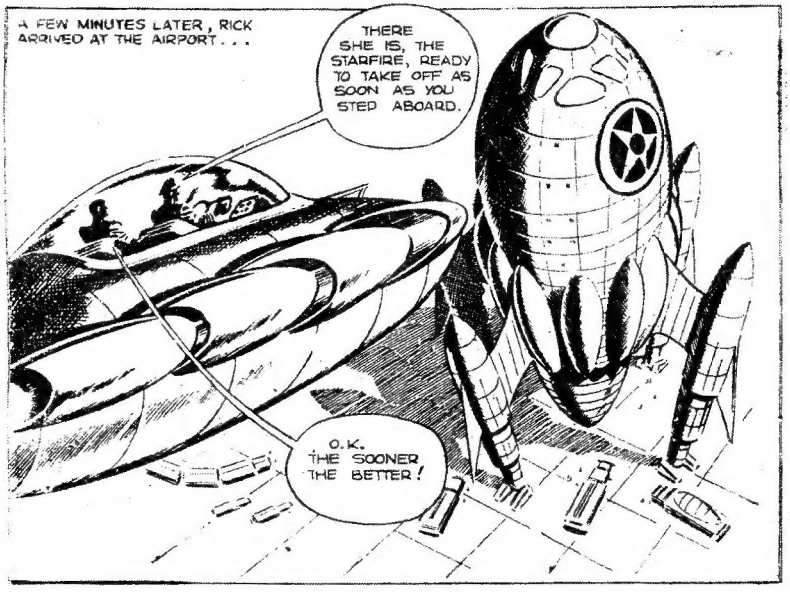
ONLY THE GOOD-WILL OF PERIDEEN, THE MURDERED PRIME MINISTER, STOOD IN THEIR WAY. NOW THEY WILL USE HIS DEATH AS AN EXCUSE TO GO TO WAR!
THEN IT IS IMPORTANT TO GET THIS AFFAIR SETTLED QUICKLY -- I MUST GO TO ARCADIA.

THE SUDDEN FLASHING OF THE EMERGENCY VISI-PHONE SIGNAL INTERRUPTED THEM....
THE AMBASSADOR FROM ARCADIA IS HERE. HE IS VERY UPSET AND INSISTS THAT HE SEE YOU AT ONCE
SEND HIM IN.

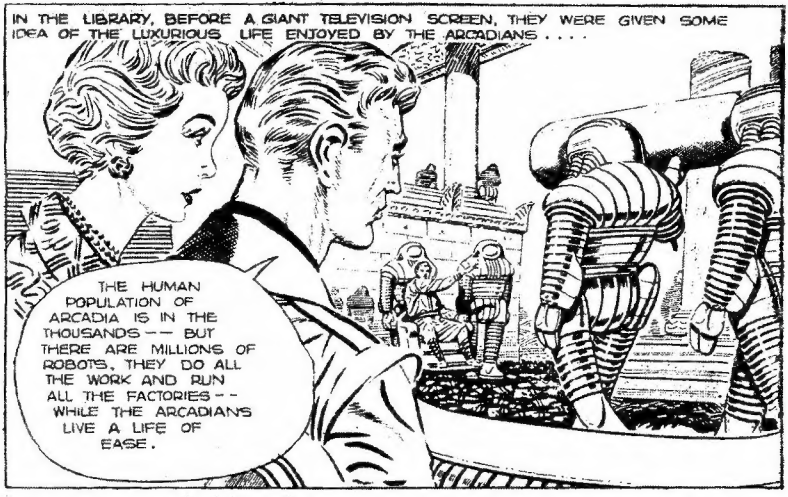

THE ARCADIAN AMBASSADOR WAS CARRIED IN UPON A CHAIR BY TWO ROBOTS...
I HAVE COME TO MAKE A VERY STRONG PROTEST. MURDER HAS BEEN DONE BY YOUR...
GREETINGS, YOUR EXCELLENCY. HOW LUCKY YOU, CALLED AT THIS TIME; YOU CAN GRANT PERMISSION TO RICK RANDOM TO PROCEED TO ARCADIA TO INVESTIGATE.

WHAT...? I'LL DO NOTHING OF THE KIND! THIS IS MURDER AND WE KNOW WHO IS GUILTY. WE WANT NO MEDDLERS ON OUR PLANET!
IF YOU REFUSE PERMISSION I SHALL TAKE THIS MATTER TO THE INTERPLANETARY BOARD. I CAN ONLY THINK YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO HIDE IF YOU WON'T LET THE MATTER BE LOOKED INTO.

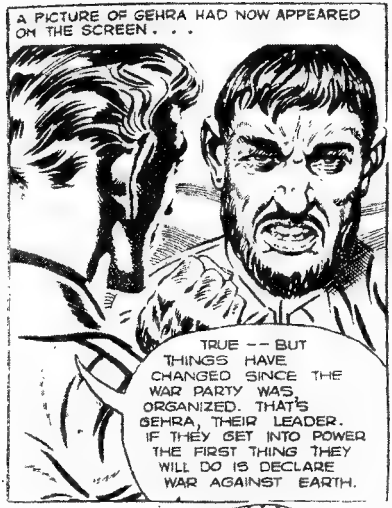
OH --ER-- IT'S ONLY THAT WE DON'T LIKE VISITORS MEDDLING IN OUR PRIVATE AFFAIRS. I'LL --I'LL DICTATE PERMISSION RIGHT AWAY
I'VE CALLED THE SPACEPORT -- A SHIP IS STANDING BY.


A FEW MINUTES LATER, RICK ARRIVED AT THE AIRPORT...
THERE SHE IS, THE STARFIRE, READY TO TAKE OFF AS SOON AS YOU STEP ABOARD.
O.K. THE SOONER THE BETTER!

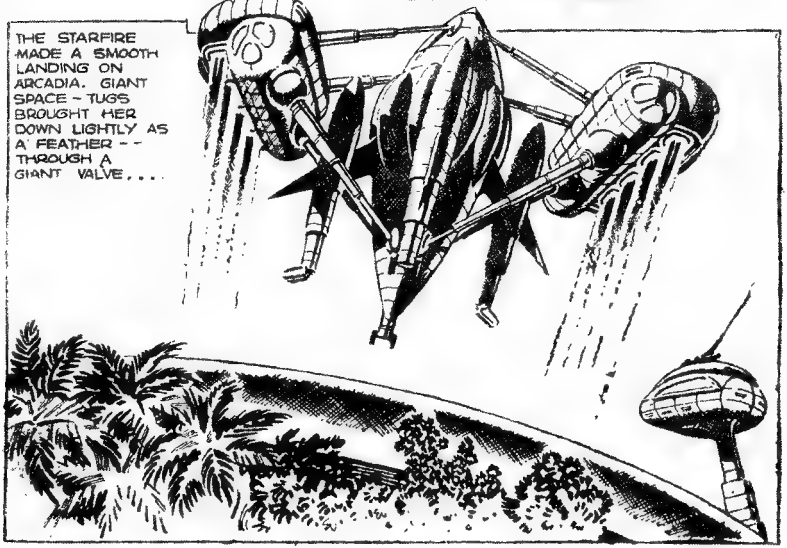
AS RICK TURNED TO THE SHIP... A BEAUTIFUL GIRL RAN FORWARD...
OH MR. RANDOM. PLEASE WAIT.... I MUST SEE YOU AT ONCE!
I'M PATTI OREEN OF THE GALACTIC PRESS. I UNDERSTAND YOU ARE GOING TO INVESTIGATE THE MURDER OF THE PRIME MINISTER. PLEASE LET ME COME WITH YOU.
ON THIS I.B.I. SHIP? THAT ISN'T USUALLY DONE, YOU KNOW.
AND THE EARTH AMBASSADOR ISN'T ACCUSED OF MURDER EVERY DAY, EITHER! SURELY YOU'LL WANT THE PRESS ON THE SPOT, SENDING OUT AN UNBIASED REPORT TO THE GALAXY.
I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT-- I'LL HAVE THE CAPTAIN ASSIGN YOU TO A CABIN.
WITHIN MINUTES, THE POWERFUL SHIP BLASTED FREE OF THE EARTH AND SPED TOWARDS THE PLANET ARCADIA...
I'M GOING TO RUN THROUGH THE HISTORY OF ARCADIA IN THE LIBRARY. WILL YOU JOIN ME, PATTI?
THANK YOU - THAT WOULD HELP WITH MY STORY TO THE PRESS.


IN THE LIBRARY, BEFORE A GIANT TELEVISION SCREEN, THEY WERE GIVEN SOME IDEA OF THE LUXURIOUS LIFE ENJOYED BY THE ARCADIANS . . . .
THE HUMAN POPULATION OF ARCADIA IS IN THE THOUSANDS -- BUT THERE ARE MILLIONS OF ROBOTS. THEY DO ALL THE WORK AND RUN ALL THE FACTORIES -- WHILE THE ARCADIANS LIVE A LIFE OF EASE.

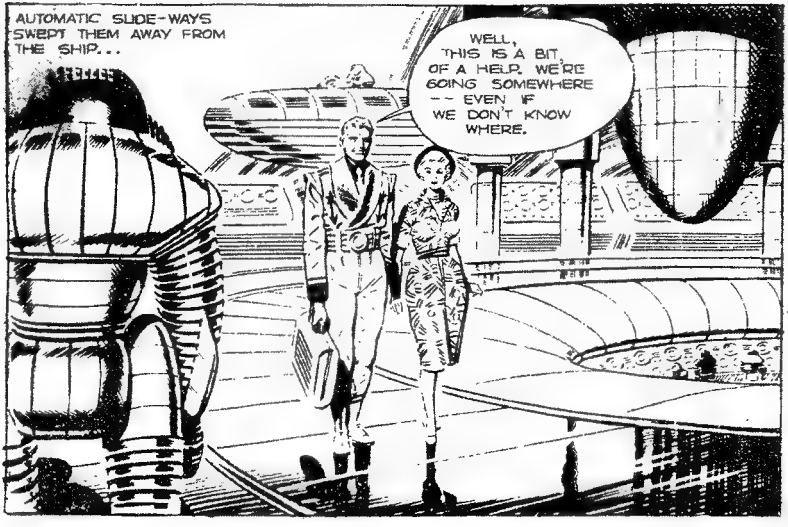
THE SURFACE OF ARCADIA IS ONE BIG GARDEN AND ALL THE ROADS, FACTORIES, AND SUCH ARE UNDERGROUND. THE ARCADIANS LIVE VERY PRIVATE LIVES AND TEND TO DISLIKE STRANGERS.
I CAN SEE WHY -- THEY'RE JUST SELFISH! THEY DON'T WANT OTHERS TO SHARE THEIR LUXURY.

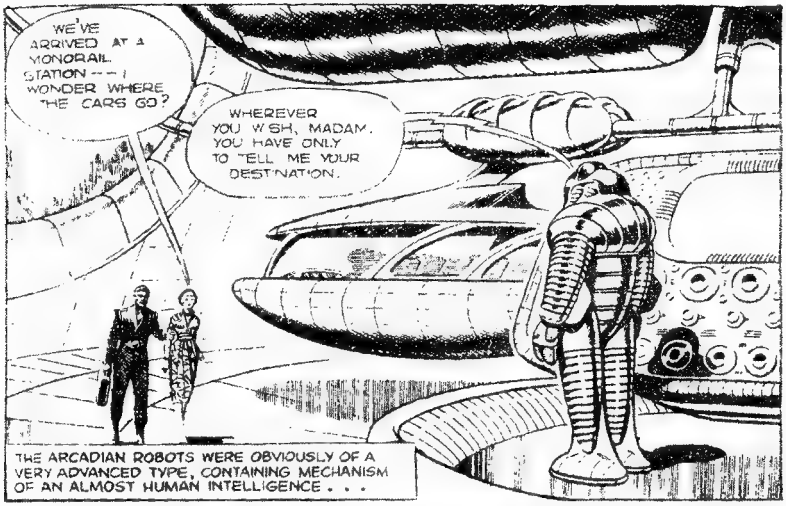

A PICTURE OF GEHRA HAD NOW APPEARED ON THE SCREEN . . .
TRUE -- BUT THINGS HAVE CHANGED SINCE THE WAR PARTY WAS ORGANIZED. THAT'S GEHRA, THEIR LEADER. IF THEY GET INTO POWER THE FIRST THING THEY WILL DO IS DECLARE WAR AGAINST EARTH.

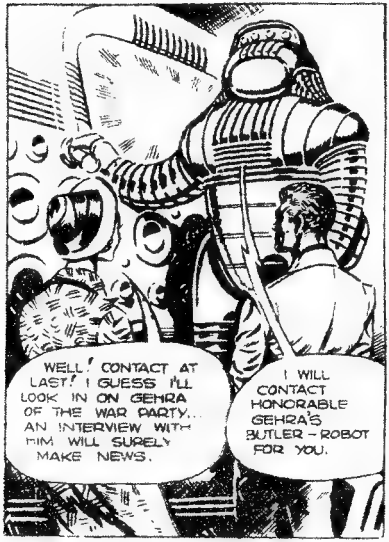
PERIDEEN, LEADER OF THE PEACE PARTY, COULD ALWAYS CONTROL GEHRA AND HIS CRACKPOTS. NOW HIS MURDER HAS BEEN FIXED ON THE EARTH AMBASSADOR, BIR HANNO, AND THAT MAKES FOR A DANGEROUS SITUATION.
END
B.I. RECORD
70996695
YOU'LL HAVE TO DISCOVER THE TRUTH. I'M SURE THE EARTH AMBASSADOR DIDN'T DO IT!


THE STARFIRE MADE A SMOOTH LANDING ON ARCADIA. GIANT SPACE - TUGS BROUGHT HER DOWN LIGHTLY AS A FEATHER -- THROUGH A GIANT VALVE. . . .

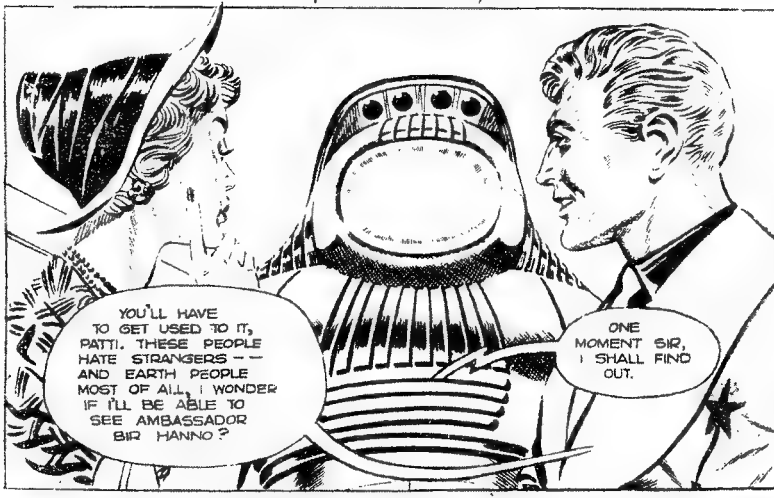
WHY... THERE SN'T A PERSON IN SIGHT.. NOTHING BUT ROBOTS!
WHERE'S THE WELCOMING COMMITTEE? I WONDER JUST HOW WE GO ABOUT CONTACTING THEM?

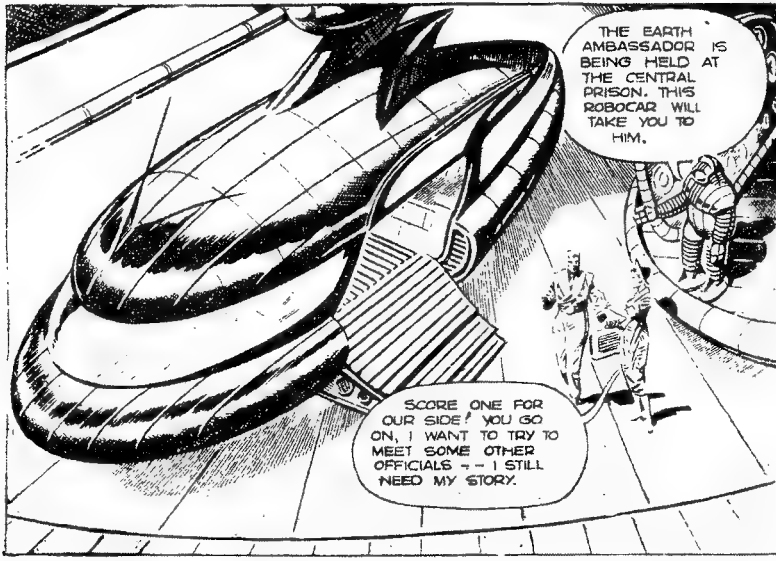

AUTOMATIC SLIDE-WAYS SWEPT THEM AWAY FROM THE SHIP...
WELL, THIS IS A BIT OF A HELP. WE'RE GOING SOMEWHERE -- EVEN IF WE DON'T KNOW WHERE.

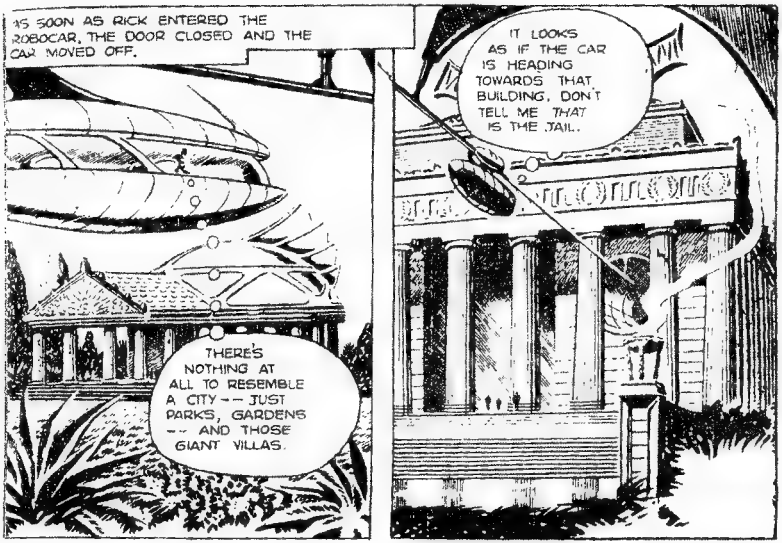

WE'VE ARRIVED AT A MONORAIL STATION -- I WONDER WHERE THE CARS GO?
WHEREVER YOU WISH, MADAM. YOU HAVE ONLY TO TELL ME YOUR DESTINATION.
THE ARCADIAN ROBOTS WERE OBVIOUSLY OF A VERY ADVANCED TYPE, CONTAINING MECHANISM OF AN ALMOST HUMAN INTELLIGENCE . . .

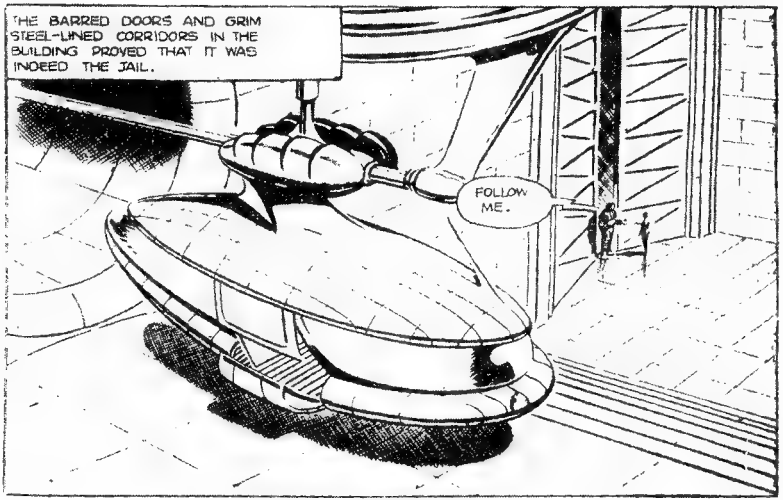

WELL! CONTACT AT LAST! I GUESS I'LL LOOK IN ON GEHRA OF THE WAR PARTY... AN INTERVIEW WITH HIM WILL SURELY MAKE NEWS.
I WILL CONTACT HONORABLE GEHRA'S BUTLER - ROBOT FOR YOU.

THE ROBOTS TALKED A FAST ROBOT SPEECH THAT NEITHER RICK NOR PATTI COULD UNDERSTAND.... THEN ONE TURNED TO PATTI....
I AM SORRY, BUT HONORABLE GEHRA IS NOT SEEING ANYONE HE DOES NOT KNOW PERSONALLY...
OH -- THE NERVE OF THE MAN!


YOU'LL HAVE TO GET USED TO IT, PATTI. THESE PEOPLE HATE STRANGERS -- AND EARTH PEOPLE MOST OF ALL. I WONDER IF I'LL BE ABLE TO SEE AMBASSADOR BIR HANNO?
ONE MOMENT SIR, I SHALL FIND OUT.


THE EARTH AMBASSADOR IS BEING HELD AT THE CENTRAL PRISON. THIS ROBOCAR WILL TAKE YOU TO HIM.
SCORE ONE FOR OUR SIDE! YOU GO ON, I WANT TO TRY TO MEET SOME OTHER OFFICIALS -- I STILL NEED MY STORY.


AS SOON AS RICK ENTERED THE ROBOCAR, THE DOOR CLOSED AND THE CAR MOVED OFF.
THERE'S NOTHING AT ALL TO RESEMBLE A CITY -- JUST PARKS, GARDENS -- AND THOSE GIANT VILLAS.
IT LOOKS AS IF THE CAR IS HEADING TOWARDS THAT BUILDING, DON'T TELL ME THAT IS THE JAIL.


THE BARRED DOORS AND GRIM STEEL-LINED CORRIDORS IN THE BUILDING PROVED THAT IT WAS INDEED THE JAIL.
FOLLOW ME.

THE LAST DOOR OPENED TO REVEAL A FAMILIAR FIGURE....
BIR HANNO!
RICK RANDOM! IS IT REALLY YOU? I HAVEN'T SEEN ANOTHER HUMAN SINCE THEY ARRESTED ME!

THE WHOLE THING IS A GHASTLY MISTAKE -- I DIDN'T KILL PERIDEEN!
IT'S NOT A MISTAKE -- IT'S A FRAME-UP, SO THAT THE BLAME CAN BE PUT ON EARTH.

OF COURSE - AND THAT EXPLAINS THE RUMOUR I HEARD ABOUT AN INVINCIBLE WEAPON THAT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED HERE. GEHRA AND HIS WAR PARTY WANT TO USE IT AGAINST EARTH
THAT'S GOT TO BE LOOKED INTO... AND IT'S CONNECTED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEATH. IF I CAN FIND THE MURDERER, I'M QUITE SURE I SHALL FIND THIS SECRET WEAPON AS WELL.

FOLLOWING SIR HANNO'S DIRECTIONS, RICK SPED TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE. SUDDENLY HE HEARD SOMEONE CALL OUT....
STOP THEM, SOMEBODY! HELP!
PATTI! WHAT HAS HAPPENED?
THIS STRANGER ENTERED THE PRIME MINISTER'S HOUSE. IT IS FORBIDDEN! I HAVE HAD HER REMOVED.
AND WHO ARE YOU?
I AM SINGH DHEEL, CHIEF OF POLICE FOR ALL ARCADIA.
YOU'RE JUST THE MAN I WANT TO SEE. HERE ARE MY CREDENTIALS. I WOULD LIKE TO INSPECT THIS HOUSE.

DHEEL COULD FIND NO REASON TO KEEP RICK OUT, HE RELUCTANTLY ALLOWED RICK AND PATTI INTO THE BUILDING.
THIS IS THE ROOM WHERE PERIDEEN WAS KILLED. HIS ROBOT-SECRETARY FOUND THE BODY A FEW MINUTES AFTER THE EARTH AMBASSADOR LEFT.

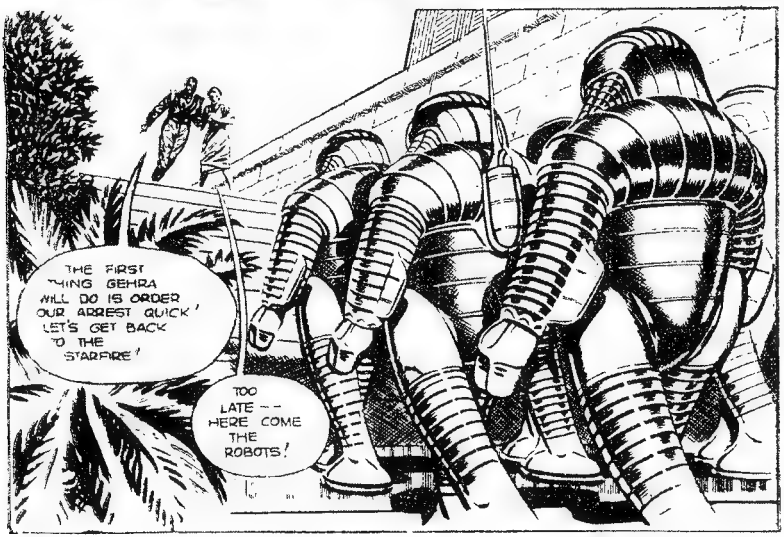
NOW, YOU MUST LEAVE. YOU HAVE SEEN EVERYTHING
PSST... PATTI! DRAW DHEEL'S ATTENTION AWAY FROM ME. I HAVE TO TALK TO THAT SECRETARY-ROBOT WITHOUT DHEEL KNOWING IT.
JUST WATCH ME!

THAT POOR MAN-- DEAD, YOU SAY! OHH....! I FEEL SO FAINT...
WHAT'S THAT?... YOU'D BETTER COME OUTSIDE...

A FEW MINUTES LATER, RICK CAME OUT...
OH, THANK YOU-- I FEEL MUCH BETTER NOW.

AS THEY WALKED AWAY FROM THE HOUSE, PATTI GLANCED EAGERLY AT RICK...
DID YOU FIND OUT ANYTHING?
MORE THAN I EXPECTED. THE LAST VISITOR TO SEE THE PRIME MINISTER, BEFORE BIR HANNO, WAS GEHRA -- THE WAR PARTY LEADER!

AS IF RICK'S WORDS HAD CONJURED UP HIS PICTURE -- GEHRA'S FACE SUDDENLY APPEARED ON ALL THE PUBLIC VISI — SCREENS, HIS VOICE BOOMING OUT....
ALL LOYAL CITIZENS OF ARCADIA WILL BE PLEASED TO KNOW THAT I AM YOUR NEW PRIME MINISTER. YOU CAN EXPECT NO WEAKNESS FROM ME TOWARDS THE COWARDLY EARTH WORMS...

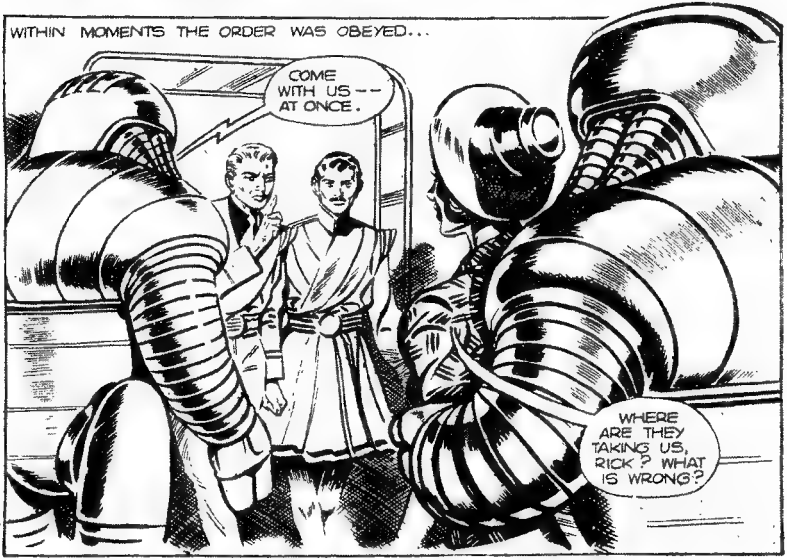

THE FIRST THING GEHRA WILL DO IS ORDER OUR ARREST QUICK! LET'S GET BACK TO THE STARFIRE!
TOO LATE -- HERE COME THE ROBOTS!

EVEN RICK WAS NO MATCH FOR THE STEEL MUSCLES OF THE ROBOTS. A FEW MINUTES LATER THEY WERE THRUST INTO PRISON...
RICK! THERE'S NO HOPE NOW..
THINGS ARE NEVER THAT BAD, BIR HANNO.

WAIT UNTIL TONIGHT, WHEN THERE ARE ONLY ROBOTS ON GUARD HERE. I THINK I KNOW A WAY OUT.
IT'S TOO LATE. WITH THE SECRET WEAPON AND GEHRA IN CONTROL— WAR WITH EARTH IS CERTAIN.

LATE THAT NIGHT, RICK OPENED HIS WRIST VISI-PHONE....
YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED THAT THE ARCADIANS OFTEN CALL THEIR ROBOTS BY RADIO. I'LL TRY TO FIND THE RIGHT FREQUENCY...
... ALL QUIET ON CELL FLOOR 10..

THAT MUST BE ONE OF THE ROBOT-GUARDS REPORTING TO THE WARDEN!
RIGHT... NOW I'LL ADJUST THE SENDING UNIT TO THE SAME WAVELENGTH AND..
ATTENTION, CELL GUARDS! BRING THE THREE EARTH PRISONERS TO MY OFFICE AND RETURN TO YOUR POSTS.


WITHIN MOMENTS THE ORDER WAS OBEYED...
COME WITH US -- AT ONCE.
WHERE ARE THEY TAKING US, RICK? WHAT IS WRONG?

EVERYTHING IS GREAT, PATTI. AFTER ALL, THERE IS NO WAY TO ESCAPE FROM A PRISON LIKE THIS. YOU HAVE TO BE TAKEN OUT.
YOU WILL REMAIN IN THE WARDEN'S OFFICE UNTIL HE COMES.

AFTER ALL, ROBOTS ARE JUST MACHINES. THEY WOULD NEVER THINK TO QUESTION ORDERS— EVEN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. I HOPED THAT THE WARDEN'S OFFICE WOULD BE EASIER TO ESCAPE FROM.
IT SHOULD BE -- LET'S TRY THE WINDOW.

THE WINDOW'S UNLOCKED -- BUT WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO GET DOWN THAT WALL.
A LITTLE THING LIKE THAT CAN'T STOP AN I.B.I. AGENT. THAT'S WHY WE HAVE SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

MY BELT IS WOVEN FROM ONE LONG STRAND OF STEELITE, THE STRONGEST PLASTIC EVER MADE. THIN AS A STRING AND WILL SUPPORT TWO TONS. THIS IS OUR WAY OUT.

KICK UNWOUND THE STEELITE STRAND AND MADE A LOOP IN IT... THEN HE LOWERED PATTI TO THE DESERTED STREET
YOU'RE NEXT, SIR HANNO - AND I'LL BE RIGHT BEHIND YOU.

WE'RE SAFE ENOUGH NOW -- BUT WHAT DO WE DO NEXT?
GET TO THE STARFIRE. ONCE WE'RE SAFE ABOARD, WE CAN MAKE FURTHER PLANS.

BUT AN UNPLEASANT SURPRISE AWAITED THEM AT THE SPACEPORT....

ON A DESERTED HILLTOP, FAR FROM ANY BUILDINGS, RICK HELD A COUNCIL OF WAR.
THERE ARE JUST THE THREE OF US -- AGAINST AN ENTIRE PLANET. WE'LL NEED HELP IF WE ARE TO FIND THE KILLER AND STOP A WAR.
PERIDEEN, THE MURDERED PRIME MINISTER, HAD FRIENDS WHO MAY HELP US, IF THEY KNOW THE TRUTH.
A GOOD IDEA. YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE OF US WHO KNOWS THIS PLANET, HANNO DO ANY OF THESE FRIENDS LIVE NEAR HERE?
PERIDEEN'S HOUSE IS NOT TOO FAR, BUT HIS WIDOW, ANA, THINKS I KILLED HER HUSBAND. SHE IS SURE TO REPORT US IF WE VISIT HER.
PERHAPS WE CAN CONVINCE HER OTHERWISE.... THAT IS A CHANCE WE SHALL HAVE TO TAKE. AND THE POLICE WILL NEVER THINK OF LOOKING FOR US IN THE MURDERED MAN'S HOUSE.
LEAD THE WAY!

SOON AFTER DAWN, THE WEARY EARTH PEOPLE REACHED THE PERIDEEN MANSION....
THERE'S ANA, BUT I'M AFRAID SHE WILL TELL HER ROBOTS TO HOLD US IF WE APPROACH.
HERE'S WHERE I CAN BE OF USE. LET ME GO AHEAD AND TALK TO HER AND EXPLAIN.

WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE WITHOUT YOUR ROBOTS -- OR WITHOUT BEING ANNOUNCED?
I'M FROM EARTH--- WHICH SHOULD TELL YOU A LOT. AND I HAVE SOME OTHER THINGS TO TELL YOU AS WELL...

RICK AND BIR HANNO LAY HIDDEN, UNTIL PATH CALLED THEM IN....
COME IN AND HAVE SOME BREAKFAST. EVERYTHING IS ALL RIGHT.

I SOMEHOW KNEW THAT YOU COULD NEVER HAVE KILLED PERIDEEN, HANNO--WE WERE ALL SUCH GOOD FRIENDS. AND NOW THAT PATTI HAS EXPLAINED.....
I UNDERSTAND, ANA, AND TRY TO BE STRONG. WE'LL FIND THE MAN WHO KILLED YOUR HUSBAND AND SEE THAT JUSTICE IS DONE.

AT THE SAME TIME WE WILL HAVE TO FIND OUT ABOUT THE 'SECRET WEAPON' THAT IS TO BE USED AGAINST EARTH.
I DON'T SEE WHY A WEAPON IS NEEDED. WITH ALL THE ROBOTS THEY HAVE, GEHRA COULD BUILD AN ARMY THAT WOULD DEFEAT EARTH IN A DAY!

THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE -- AND I'LL SHOW YOU WHY. THESE ROBOTS ARE MY FAITHFUL SERVANTS, AND WILL OBEY ONLY ME. YET, IF I TAKE THIS KNIFE AND TRY TO KILL YOU....
OHHHH!

THEY WILL STOP ME INSTANTLY. NEITHER WILL THEY KILL ANYONE THEMSELVES! IT IS ONE OF THE ROBOT LAWS BUILT INTO THEIR BRAINS. EVEN GEHRA CANNOT MAKE THEM DO ANYTHING EXCEPT RESTRAIN THE VIOLENT ACTIONS OF OTHERS.

YET I CANNOT HELP THINKING THAT ROBOTS ARE INVOLVED. THEY ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR ON ARCADIA, AND GEHRA IS IN CHARGE OF THE BIGGEST ROBOT FACTORY.
GEHRA SEEMS TO HOLD ALL THE ANSWERS TO THIS MYSTERY-- WE'LL HAVE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HIM.

THERE IS AN ANNOUNCEMENT HERE THAT ALL THE LEADERS OF THE WAR PARTY ARE MEETING TONIGHT AT GEHRA'S MANSION.
ARCADIAN
THIS IS OUR CHANCE. HE CAN'T KNOW THEM ALL BY SIGHT AND WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIND OUR WAY IN AMONG THE CROWD.

I'LL HAVE ROBOTS ASSIGNED AS YOUR SERVANTS, TO MAKE YOU LOOK QUITE AUTHENTIC.
I'M TOO WELL KNOWN, RICK. I'M AFRAID YOU'LL HAVE TO GO BY YOUR-SELF.

LATER THAT EVENING
THIS IS THE VERY LATEST STYLE IN EVENING DRESS, SIR.
I HARDLY RECOGNIZE YOU, RICK.
I HOPE THE SAME GOES FOR EVERYONE ELSE.

WHEN RICK WAS CARRIED TOWARDS GEHRA'S MANSION, HE HAD HIS FIRST SETBACK....
THERE'S SOMEONE AT THE DOOR -- EXAMINING PASSES! I WON'T BE ABLE TO GET IN UNLESS I HAVE A LITTLE HELP.
EXCUSE ME, SIR.
YES...

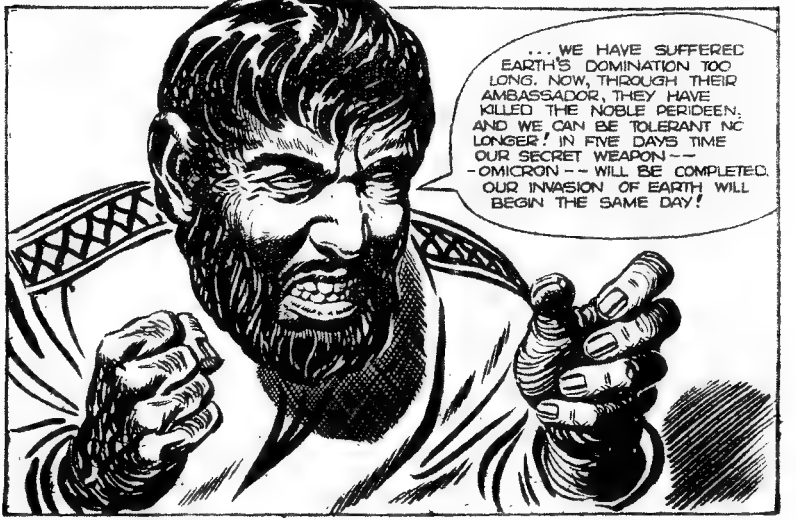
YOU KNOW YOU MUST HAVE IDENTIFICATION TO BE ADMITTED -- DO YOU HAVE YOURS?
WHY, YES -- OF COURSE. RIGHT HERE.

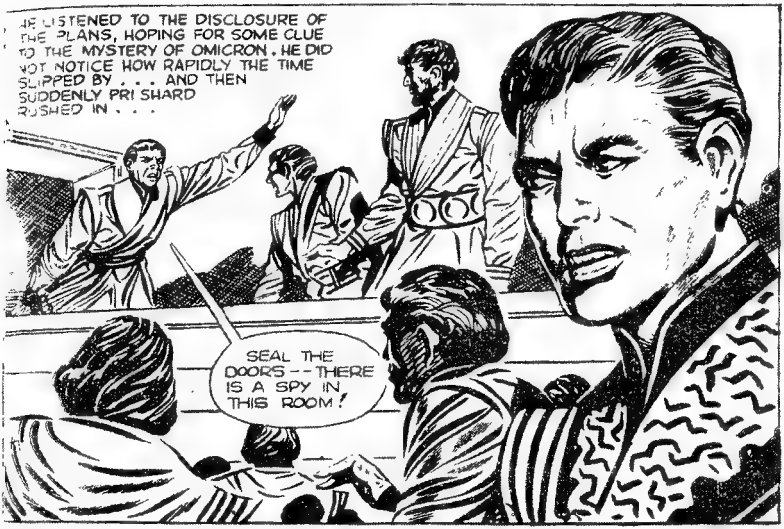
RICK KNEW THAT THE ROBOTS WOULD STOP HIM AT THE LEAST SIGN OF VIOLENCE -- YET HE HAD TO HAVE THE PASS. LEANING FORWARD, AS IF TO LOOK AT THE PASS, HIS HAND RESTED FOR A MOMENT ON THE OTHER MAN'S NECK . . .

A SUDDEN, UNSEEN PRESSURE ON A HIDDEN NERVE, RENDERED THE MAN UNCONSCIOUS IN AN INSTANT.

THE DOOR GUARD MERELY GLANCED AT RICK'S PASS AND WAVED HIM IN . .

I HAVE AT LEAST HALF AN HOUR BEFORE THE REAL PRI SHARD RECOVERS CONSCIOUSNESS.. THAT JUDO HOLD WON'T HAVE HURT HIM -- BUT HE'LL BE A VERY ANGRY POLITICIAN. I'LL HAVE TO FIND OUT WHAT I CAN BEFORE THEN.
... ALL LOYAL MEMBERS OF THE WAR PARTY, ATTENTION ...


... WE HAVE SUFFERED EARTH'S DOMINATION TOO LONG. NOW, THROUGH THEIR AMBASSADOR, THEY HAVE KILLED THE NOBLE PERIDEEN; AND WE CAN BE TOLERANT NO LONGER! IN FIVE DAYS TIME OUR SECRET WEAPON -- -OMICRON -- WILL BE COMPLETED. OUR INVASION OF EARTH WILL BEGIN THE SAME DAY!


HE LISTENED TO THE DISCLOSURE OF THE PLANS, HOPING FOR SOME CLUE TO THE MYSTERY OF OMICRON. HE DID NOT NOTICE HOW RAPIDLY THE TIME SLIPPED BY . . . AND THEN SUDDENLY PRI SHARD RUSHED IN . . .
SEAL THE DOORS -- THERE IS A SPY IN THIS ROOM!

RICK REALISED HIS ONLY CHANCE OF ESCAPE WAS TO CREATE A DIVERSION . . .
YOU TWO ROBOTS -- TAKE THIS CARRYING CHAIR THROUGH THAT DOOR AND DO NOT LET ANYTHING STOP YOU.

IT WAS THEN THAT PRI SHARD SAW THE DISAPPEARING CARRYING CHAIR...

THERE HE GOES-- DON'T LET HIM ESCAPE!

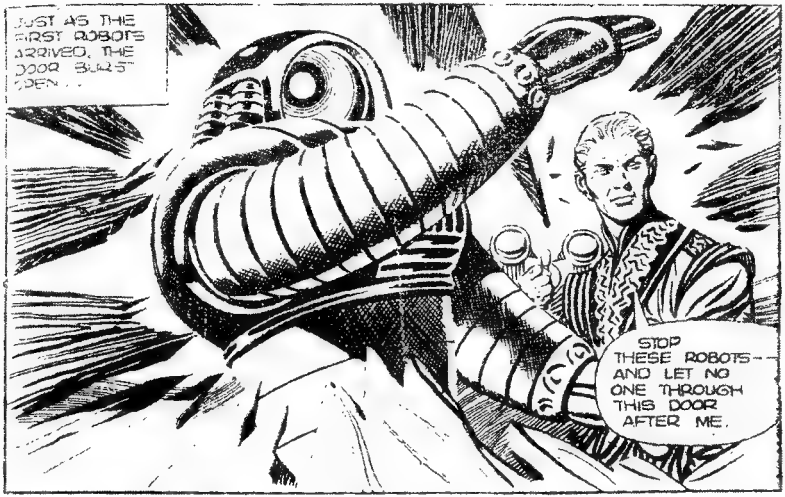
THAT EMPTY CHAIR WILL KEEP THEM BUSY FOR A MOMENT. YOU-- ROBOT -- COME WITH ME.

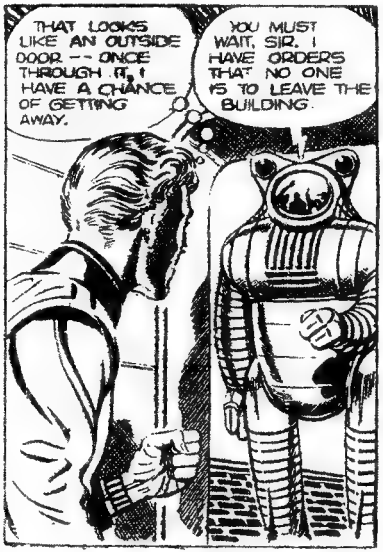
RICK FOUND HIS WAY TO ESCAPE BARRED, AT THE SAME TIME AS THE CHAIR WAS DISCOVERED TO BE EMPTY...

THE CHAIR IS EMPTY-- THE SPY IS GONE!

THERE HE IS!

LOCKED! QUICKLY!-- BREAK IT OPEN!


JUST AS THE FIRST ROBOTS ARRIVED, THE DOOR BURST OPEN...
STOP THESE ROBOTS-- AND LET NO ONE THROUGH THIS DOOR AFTER ME.


THAT LOOKS LIKE AN OUTSIDE DOOR -- ONCE THROUGH IT, I HAVE A CHANCE OF GETTING AWAY.
YOU MUST WAIT, SIR. I HAVE ORDERS THAT NO ONE IS TO LEAVE THE BUILDING.

RICK STRUGGLED FIERCELY -- BUT HIS STRENGTH WAS NOTHING AGAINST THE SOLID METAL OF THE ROBOT....
I CAN'T DO A THING WITH THIS MACHINE... BUT IF I CAN'T OUT-FIGHT IT, .. MAYBE I CAN OUT-THINK IT.

WORKING DESPERATELY AGAINST TIME, RICK SLOWLY FORCED HIS HAND UP AGAINST THE ROBOT'S SIDE
THIS.. LOOKS LIKE A MARK IV ROBOT.. THE ACCESS PLATE SHOULD BE HERE..
THE PLATE SNAPPED OPEN AND RICK JAMMED DOWN THE SWITCH INSIDE -- CUTTING OFF THE ROBOT'S POWER...
PRESS
THAT ROBOT WILL JUST STAND IN THE DOORWAY LIKE A STATUE -- AND IT SHOULD SLOW DOWN THE CHASE. NOW TO GET UNDER COVER BEFORE I'M SEEN.

RICK LOOKED AROUND DESPERATELY FOR A MEANS OF ESCAPE AS THE ROBOTS CAME THROUGH THE DOOR. HE SAW A SMALL OPENING, AND DROPPED QUICKLY TO THE FLOOR . . .
NOT A SECOND TOO SOON!
HE CRAWLED THROUGH, UNTIL HE CAME OUT INTO THE OPEN . . . SOMETHING RUSTLED IN THE BUSHES NEARBY . . .
A ROPE LADDER! WHERE IS IT COMING FROM?
QUICKLY -- CLIMB UP IT!
SIR HANNO! I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU FOUND ME. YOU'RE A LIFESAVER!
I THOUGHT THERE MIGHT BE TROUBLE, SO I CRUISED OVER THE HOUSE, WATCHING WITH THESE NIGHT-GLASSES, AND-- WATCH OUT!

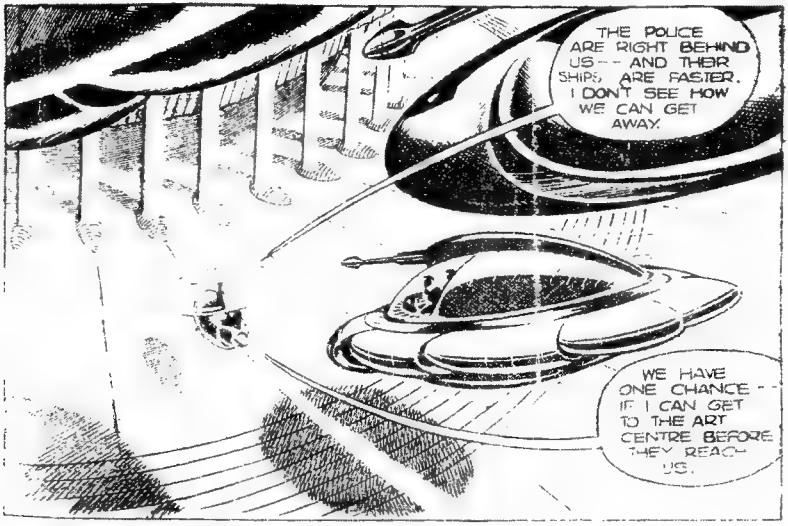
RICK JUMPED INSTANTLY -- BUT THE ROBOT'S SPEED WAS INCREDIBLY FAST. STEEL FINGERS CLAMPED ON RICK'S BOOT...
IT'S GOT ME -- BUT PULL THE LADDER IN, ANYWAY.

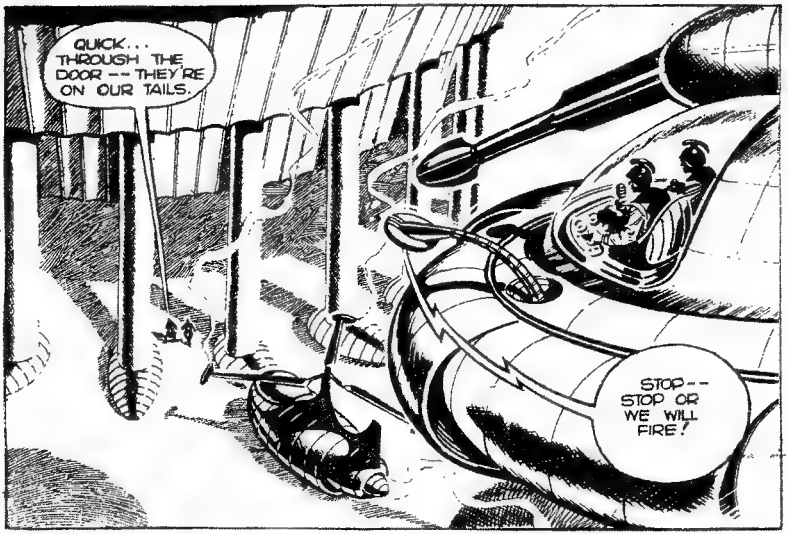
IT'S NO USE, RICK -- IT'S STILL HANGING ON.
WAIT.. WE HAVE A TRICK OR TWO LEFT. GET READY TO STOP THE LADDER-LIFT-MOTOR -- NOW!

WHEN JUST HIS LEG -- AND THE ROBOT -- WERE OUTSIDE THE HELICAR, RICK SLID THE DOOR SHUT MOST OF THE WAY...
AND NOW -- TO SLIP OUT OF THIS BOOT BEFORE MR. ROBOT CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT I'M DOING..

THE DOOR IS SHUT HANNO -- LET'S GET AWAY!
IF I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE, I'D SWEAR THAT ROBOT HAD A SURPRISED LOOK ON HIS FACE.

HERE COME THE POLICE HELICRUISERS. WE'VE GOT TO MOVE FAST.


THE POLICE ARE RIGHT BEHIND US -- AND THEIR SHIPS ARE FASTER. I DON'T SEE HOW WE CAN GET AWAY.
WE HAVE ONE CHANCE -- IF I CAN GET TO THE ART CENTRE BEFORE THEY REACH US.


QUICK... THROUGH THE DOOR -- THEY'RE ON OUR TAILS.
STOP -- STOP OR WE WILL FIRE!

THIS IS ONE TRICK I HAVE USED BEFORE. I DON'T THINK THE POLICE KNOW ABOUT IT. HERE -- SLIDEWAY 13, TO THE HALLS OF SCULPTURE.
13
14
15

THE DIRECTOR OF THE ART CENTRE IS A FRIEND-- AND A MEMBER OF THE PEACE PARTY. I WAS WORKING SECRETLY WITH THEM TO AVOID WAR. I USED THIS ROUTE BEFORE WHEN I THOUGHT I WAS BEING FOLLOWED.

NO ONE COMING YET-- THEY MUST NOT HAVE SEEN WHICH OF THE SLIDEWAYS WE TOOK.
THROUGH THIS DOOR.

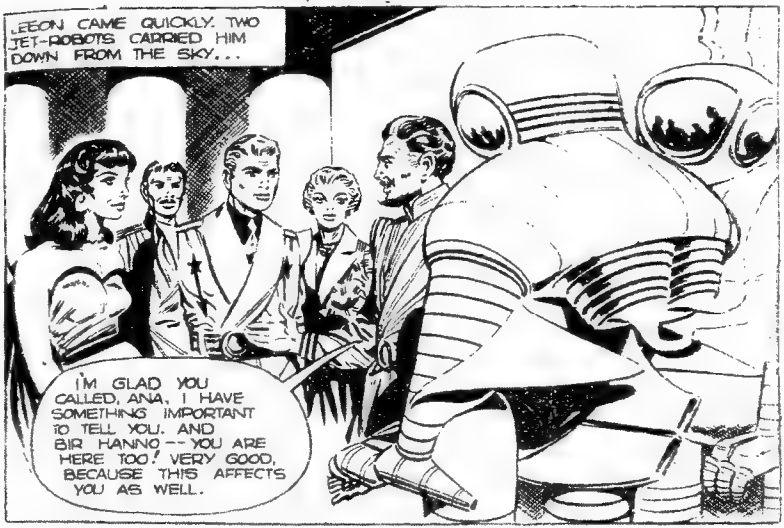
A MONO-RAIL STATION!
AND HERE COMES A CAR NOW. I'LL STOP IT WITH THE SIGNAL ...WE WILL BE MILES AWAY BEFORE THEY THINK TO LOOK DOWN HERE.

AFTER CHANGING CARS TO CONFUSE THEIR TRAIL, RICK AND HANNO REACHED THE PERIDEEN MANSION.
YOU'RE BOTH SAFE -- WE WERE SO WORRIED.
I FOUND OUT A LOT, BUT THE NEWS ISN'T GOOD.

WE HAVE ONLY FIVE DAYS TO FIND OUT WHO KILLED PERIDEEN, OR THE INVASION OF THE EARTH WITH OMICRON WILL BEGIN. IF WE CAN PROVE THAT GEHRA IS BEHIND THE MURDER, I THINK THE REST OF THE WAR PARTY WILL THINK TWICE ABOUT INTERPLANETARY WAR.

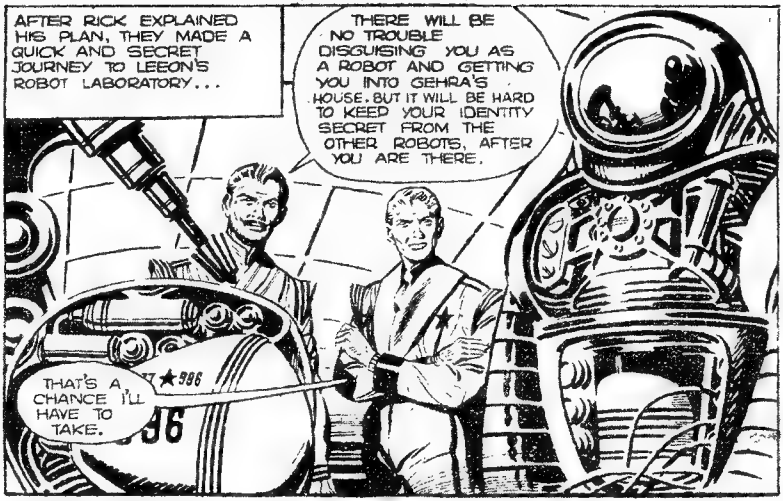
IF ONLY THERE WAS SOMETHING I COULD DO TO HELP!
THERE IS. I MUST GET INTO GEHRA'S HOUSE, AND THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY I CAN DO THAT WITHOUT BEING STOPPED. I MUST GO AS A ROBOT.

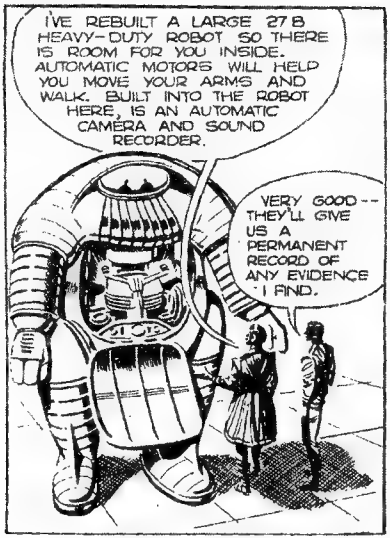
THERE IS A MAN, NAMED LEEON, IN THE PEACE PARTY WHO IS A LEADING ROBOT ENGINEER ON ARCADIA. HE WOULD HELP.
ASK HIM TO COME HERE, AND I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT I HAVE PLANNED.


LEEON CAME QUICKLY. TWO JET-ROBOTS CARRIED HIM DOWN FROM THE SKY...
I'M GLAD YOU CALLED, ANA. I HAVE SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO TELL YOU. AND SIR HANNO -- YOU ARE HERE TOO! VERY GOOD, BECAUSE THIS AFFECTS YOU AS WELL.

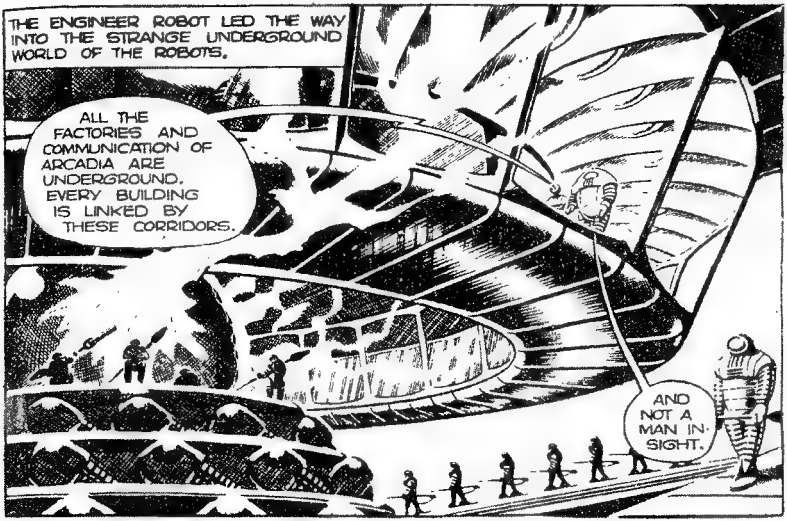
AS YOU KNOW, THE POLICE NEVER RELEASED ANY DETAILS OF PERIDEEN'S DEATH. BUT WORKING THROUGH ROBOTS, I HAVE FOUND OUT THAT HE WAS STABBED -- WITH THIS DAGGER. THE ROBOTS TOOK IT WITHOUT BEING DISCOVERED.
WITH THIS EVIDENCE -- WILL YOU BE ABLE TO DISCOVER THE TRUE IDENTITY OF MY HUSBAND'S MURDERER?

I'M SURE WE CAN -- BECAUSE THIS IS AN ANTIQUE, AN ANCIENT NUBIANO RITUAL DAGGER -- AND THEY ARE ALWAYS MADE IN PAIRS. IF WE CAN FIND THE OTHER, WE MAY FIND THE KILLER
HERE IS THE MAN WHO CAN DO IT, LEEON. RICK RANDOM OF THE I.B.I

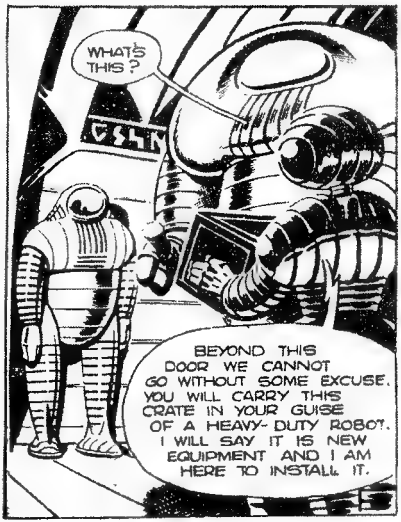

AFTER RICK EXPLAINED HIS PLAN, THEY MADE A QUICK AND SECRET JOURNEY TO LEEON'S ROBOT LABORATORY...
THERE WILL BE NO TROUBLE DISGUISING YOU AS A ROBOT AND GETTING YOU INTO GEHRA'S HOUSE. BUT IT WILL BE HARD TO KEEP YOUR IDENTITY SECRET FROM THE OTHER ROBOTS, AFTER YOU ARE THERE.
THAT'S A CHANCE I'LL HAVE TO TAKE.

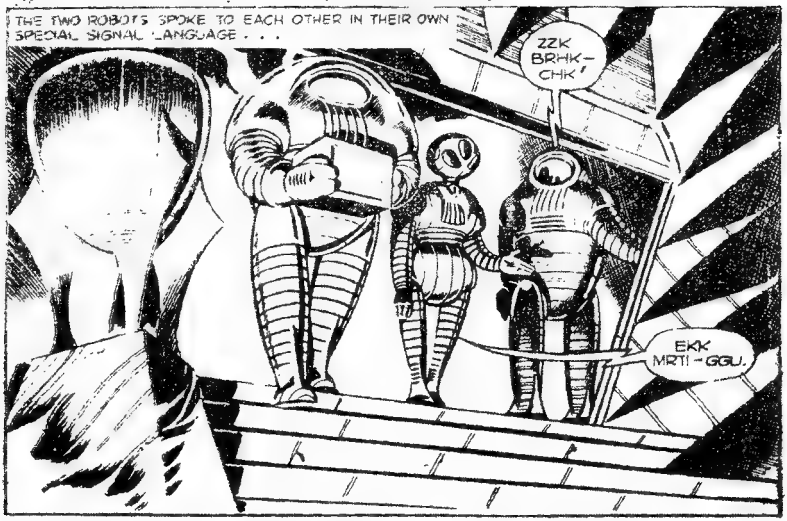

I'VE REBUILT A LARGE 27 B HEAVY-DUTY ROBOT SO THERE IS ROOM FOR YOU INSIDE. AUTOMATIC MOTORS WILL HELP YOU MOVE YOUR ARMS AND WALK. BUILT INTO THE ROBOT HERE, IS AN AUTOMATIC CAMERA AND SOUND RECORDER.
VERY GOOD -- THEY'LL GIVE US A PERMANENT RECORD OF ANY EVIDENCE I FIND.

I AM SENDING THIS ENGINEER-ASSISTANT ROBOT WITH YOU AS A GUIDE. IT IS A SPECIAL MODEL WITH HIGH INTELLIGENCE AND WILL HELP IN ANY WAY.
ALL RIGHT-SHUT ME IN

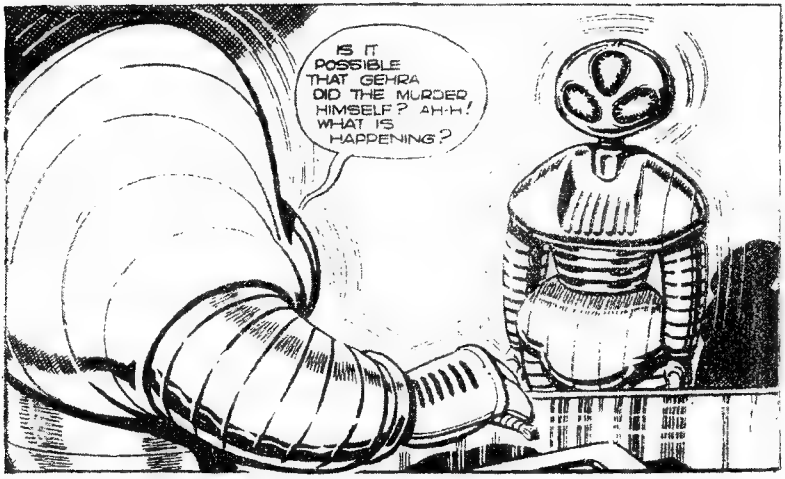

THE ENGINEER ROBOT LED THE WAY INTO THE STRANGE UNDERGROUND WORLD OF THE ROBOTS.
ALL THE FACTORIES AND COMMUNICATION OF ARCADIA ARE UNDERGROUND. EVERY BUILDING IS LINKED BY THESE CORRIDORS.
AND NOT A MAN IN SIGHT.

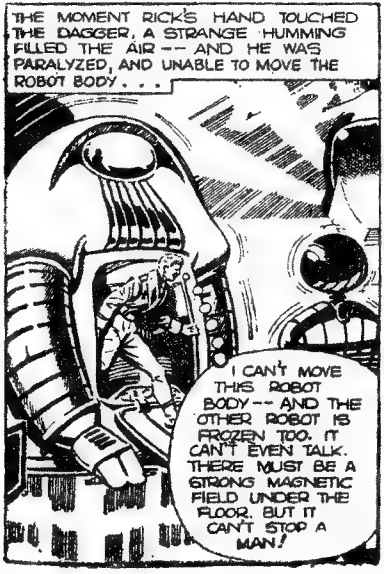
HUMANS RARELY COME HERE. THIS IS THE TUNNEL WE SEEK.


WHAT'S THIS?
BEYOND THIS DOOR WE CANNOT GO WITHOUT SOME EXCUSE. YOU WILL CARRY THIS CRATE IN YOUR GUISE OF A HEAVY-DUTY ROBOT. I WILL SAY IT IS NEW EQUIPMENT AND I AM HERE TO INSTALL IT.


THE TWO ROBOTS SPOKE TO EACH OTHER IN THEIR OWN SPECIAL SIGNAL LANGUAGE . . .
ZZK BRHK-CHK!
EKK MRTI-GGU.

THIS IS THE PRIVATE STUDY OF THE MAN GEHRA.
IT LOOKS LIKE THIS IS GOING TO BE EASIER THAN I THOUGHT -- THERE'S THE OTHER DAGGER ON THE TABLE.

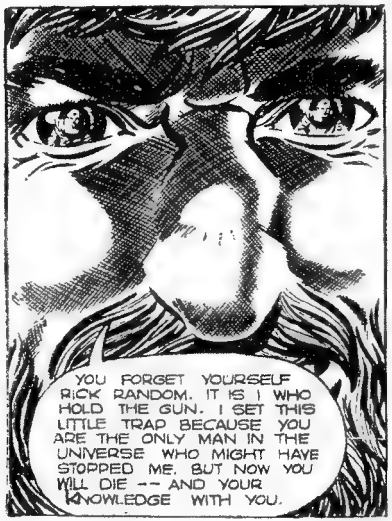

IS IT POSSIBLE THAT GEHRA DID THE MURDER HIMSELF? AH-H! WHAT IS HAPPENING?


THE MOMENT RICK'S HAND TOUCHED THE DAGGER, A STRANGE HUMMING FILLED THE AIR -- AND HE WAS PARALYZED, AND UNABLE TO MOVE THE ROBOT BODY . . .
I CAN'T MOVE THIS ROBOT BODY -- AND THE OTHER ROBOT IS FROZEN TOO. IT CAN'T EVEN TALK. THERE MUST BE A STRONG MAGNETIC FIELD UNDER THE FLOOR. BUT IT CAN'T STOP A MAN!

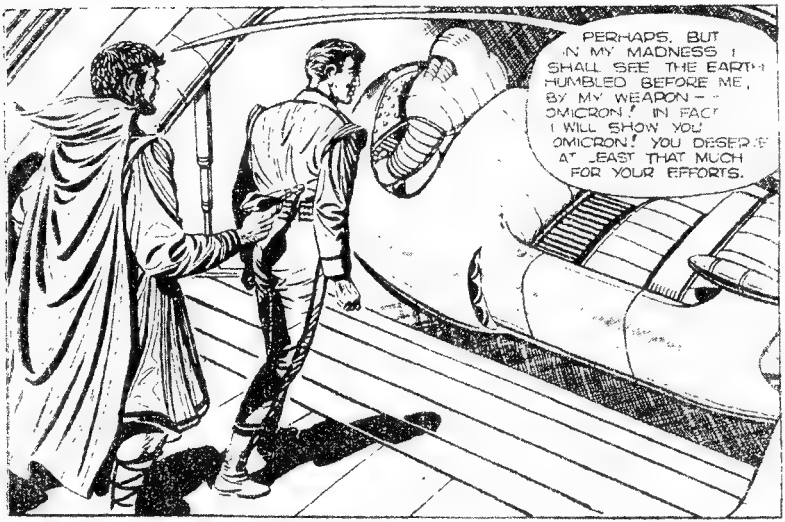
BUT BEFORE RICK COULD REACH SAFETY, THE DOOR OPENED AND GEHRA STOOD THERE, SMILING OVER THE SIGHTS OF HIS GUN...
PLEASE STOP--OR YOU WILL FORCE ME TO KILL YOU. I THOUGHT THAT OTHER DAGGER WOULD BE BAIT ENOUGH TO DRAW YOU OUT OF YOUR HOLE!

YOU SAY OTHER DAGGER -- THEN YOU ADMIT KNOWLEDGE OF PERIDEEN'S MURDER ?
MORE THAN THAT -- I ADMIT THAT I KILLED HIM! THERE WAS NO ONE I COULD TRUST, SO I HAD TO DO IT MYSELF.

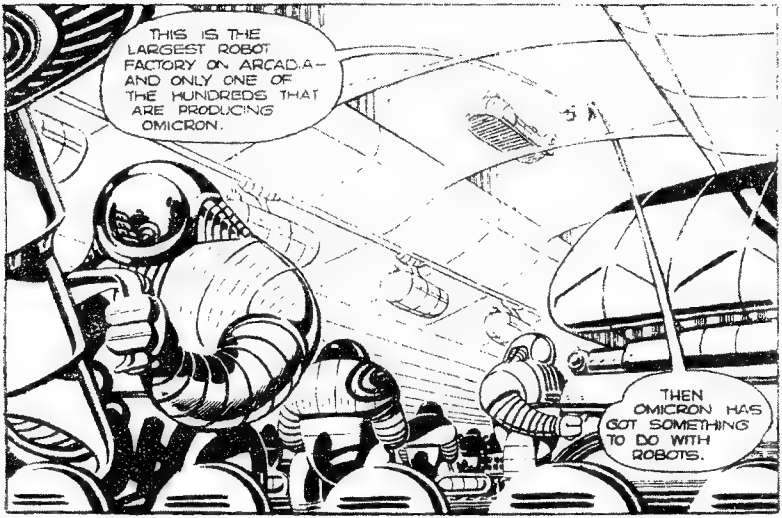
I SIMPLY STAYED BEHIND AND KILLED PERIDEEN AFTER BIR HANNO LEFT. I AFTERWARDS DESTROYED ALL THE ROBOTS WHO SAW ME THERE.
YOU ARE UNDER ARREST FOR MURDER, GEHRA.


YOU FORGET YOURSELF RICK RANDOM. IT IS I WHO HOLD THE GUN. I SET THIS LITTLE TRAP BECAUSE YOU ARE THE ONLY MAN IN THE UNIVERSE WHO MIGHT HAVE STOPPED ME. BUT NOW YOU WILL DIE -- AND YOUR KNOWLEDGE WITH YOU.

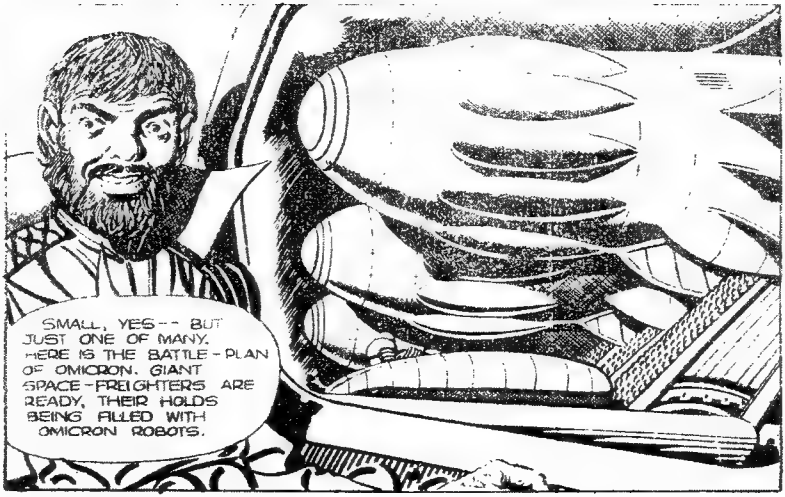
RICK'S LAST HOPE WAS DESTROYED WHEN GEHRA SMASHED OPEN THE ROBOT...
YOU THINK I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE THE RECORDER LENS. NOW THE EVIDENCE IS DESTROYED -- JUST AS THESE TWO ROBOTS WILL BE.
YOU'RE MAD, GEHRA.


PERHAPS. BUT IN MY MADNESS I SHALL SEE THE EARTH HUMBLED BEFORE ME, BY MY WEAPON -- OMICRON! IN FACT I WILL SHOW YOU OMICRON! YOU DESERVE AT LEAST THAT MUCH FOR YOUR EFFORTS.

JUST AS A PRECAUTION -- THESE MANACLES WILL MAKE SURE THAT YOU DON'T TRY TO ESCAPE.

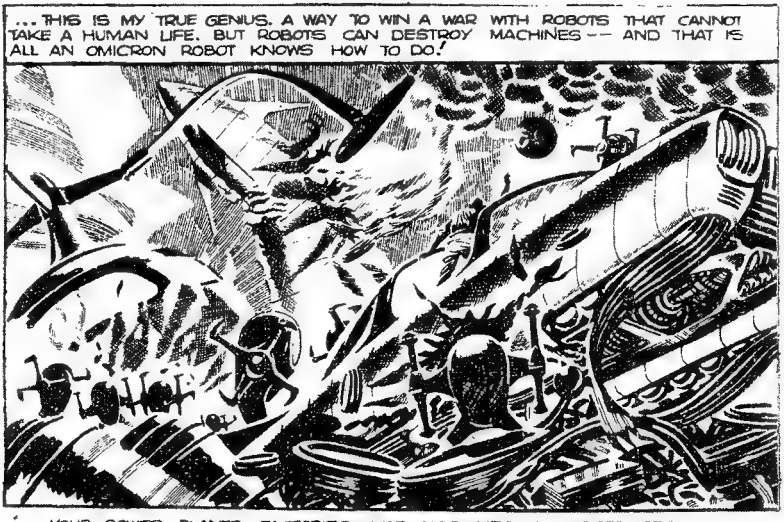

THIS IS THE LARGEST ROBOT FACTORY ON ARCADIA— AND ONLY ONE OF THE HUNDREDS THAT ARE PRODUCING OMICRON.
THEN OMICRON HAS GOT SOMETHING TO DO WITH ROBOTS.

ALL EARTH WILL SOON SHARE THAT KNOWLEDGE, MR. RANDOM — — ONLY THEY WILL LEARN IT TOO LATE. THIS IS OMICRON.
THAT? A SMALL ROBOT..?

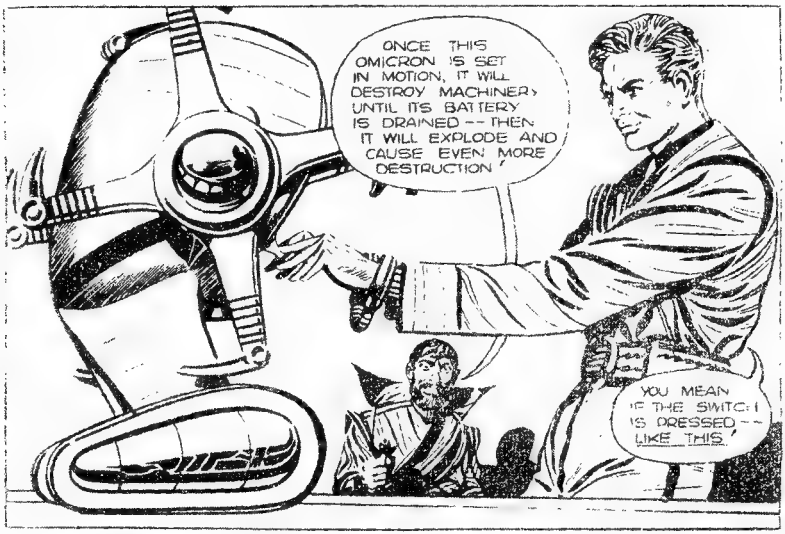

SMALL, YES -- BUT JUST ONE OF MANY. HERE IS THE BATTLE-PLAN OF OMICRON. GIANT SPACE-FREIGHTERS ARE READY, THEIR HOLDS BEING FILLED WITH OMICRON ROBOTS.

... THE FREIGHTERS WILL NOT APPROACH EARTH, BUT WILL DROP OVER FIVE MILLION OMICRONS IN THE ORBIT OF EARTH...

... EACH ROBOT HAS A BUILT-IN GRAV-SHUTE THAT WILL DROP IT TO EARTH. MANY WILL BE DESTROYED BUT MILLIONS WILL GET THROUGH, FALLING IN A ROBOT RAIN ON YOUR PLANET...


...THIS IS MY TRUE GENIUS. A WAY TO WIN A WAR WITH ROBOTS THAT CANNOT TAKE A HUMAN LIFE. BUT ROBOTS CAN DESTROY MACHINES -- AND THAT IS ALL AN OMICRON ROBOT KNOWS HOW TO DO!

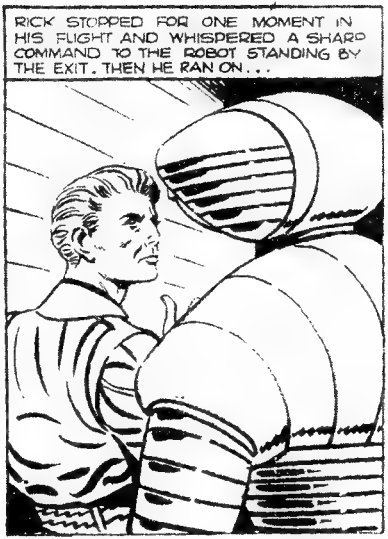
'...YOUR POWER PLANTS, FACTORIES, WAR MACHINES AND DEFENCES WILL ALL BE DESTROYED. AND WHEN THEY ARE, OUR FORCES WILL DESCEND AND MAKE YOUR RUINED PLANET A COLONY OF OURS...'


ONCE THIS OMICRON IS SET IN MOTION, IT WILL DESTROY MACHINERY UNTIL ITS BATTERY IS DRAINED -- THEN IT WILL EXPLODE AND CAUSE EVEN MORE DESTRUCTION!
YOU MEAN IF THE SWITCH IS PRESSED -- LIKE THIS!

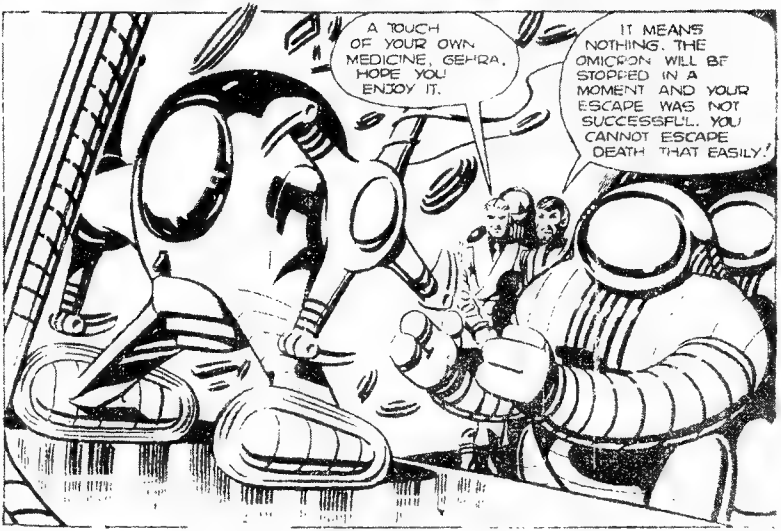
STOP IT, YOU FOOL! IT WILL DESTROY VITAL MACHINERY!
THAT'S JUST MY IDEA.

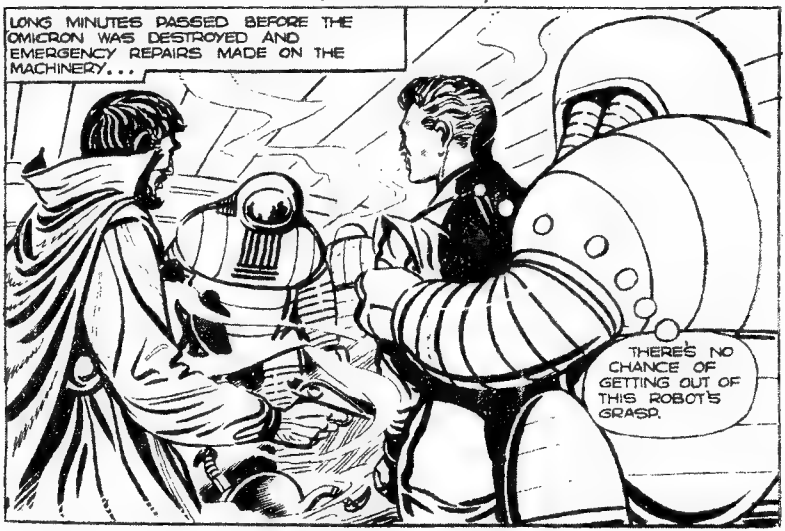
STOP HIM! HE MUST NOT ESCAPE.

I HAVE NO CHANCE OF OUTRUNNING THOSE ROBOTS, OR EVEN FINDING MY WAY OUT OF HERE. BUT I'VE AN IDEA...


RICK STOPPED FOR ONE MOMENT IN HIS FLIGHT AND WHISPERED A SHARP COMMAND TO THE ROBOT STANDING BY THE EXIT. THEN HE RAN ON...

CAPTURE WAS CERTAIN, AND A MOMENT LATER STEEL ARMS HELD HIM...
ONE ROBOT HOLD HIM -- YOU JK19! -- THE REST OF YOU HELP ME STOP THIS OMICRON.


A TOUCH OF YOUR OWN MEDICINE, GEHRA. HOPE YOU ENJOY IT.
IT MEANS NOTHING. THE OMICRON WILL BE STOPPED IN A MOMENT AND YOUR ESCAPE WAS NOT SUCCESSFUL. YOU CANNOT ESCAPE DEATH THAT EASILY!


LONG MINUTES PASSED BEFORE THE OMICRON WAS DESTROYED AND EMERGENCY REPAIRS MADE ON THE MACHINERY...
THERE'S NO CHANCE OF GETTING OUT OF THIS ROBOT'S GRASP.

FINALLY, GEHRA TURNED WITH A TRIUMPHANT SMILE ON HIS LIPS.
NO PERMANENT DAMAGE DONE! YOU HAVE ONLY SUCCEEDED IN POSTPONING WHAT HAS TO BE DONE.... ALL ROBOTS LEAVE. I WISH TO BE ALONE WITH MEDDLING MR. RANDOM.

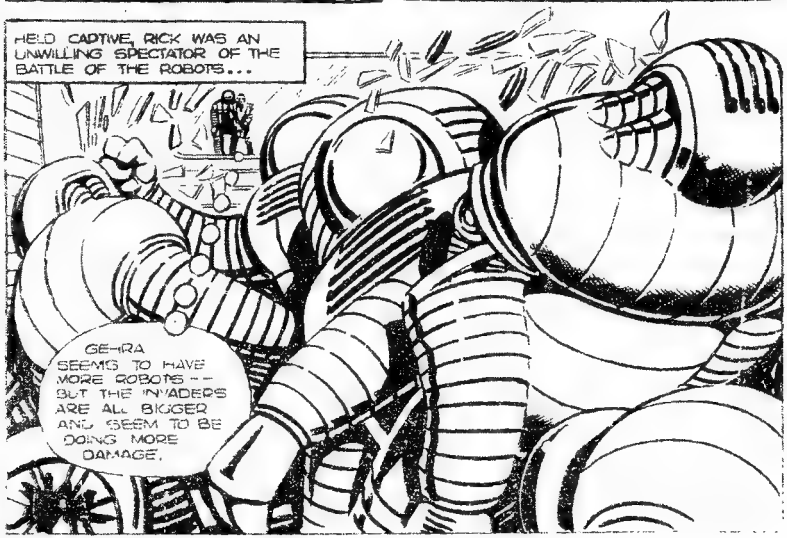
GOOD-BYE, RICK RANDOM. I MUST SAY YOU HAVE GIVEN ME MUCH DIFFICULTY, AND I TAKE GREAT PLEASURE IN REMOVING YOU.
I'M NOT GOING TO BEG FOR MERCY, GEHRA. AND DON'T THINK YOU'LL GET AWAY WITH THIS. YOU'LL FACE TRIAL FOR MURDER YET--

VERY HEROIC--BUT VERY UNREAL, AS YOU SHALL SEE... BUT WHAT'S THAT NOISE? WHAT'S HAPPENING DOWN THERE ?
STRANGE ROBOTS, NOBLE GEHRA. THEY ARE FORCING THEIR WAY INTO THE FACTORY.

THIS IS YOUR DOING-- AND I'LL KILL YOU FOR IT!
YOU HEARD HIM, ROBOT-- STOP HIM! HE MEANS TO KILL ME!

KILLING IS FORBIDDEN, MASTER. THAT IS THE LAW.
LET ME GO!

YOU'VE WON THIS HAND, RANDOM -- BUT I'LL WIN THE GAME! AS SOON AS I HAVE DESTROYED THESE INVADING ROBOTS I'LL BE BACK TO DO WHAT HAS TO BE DONE. ROBOT -- HOLD HIM HERE.


HELD CAPTIVE, RICK WAS AN UNWILLING SPECTATOR OF THE BATTLE OF THE ROBOTS...
GE-RA SEEMS TO HAVE MORE ROBOTS -- BUT THE INVADERS ARE ALL BIGGER AND SEEM TO BE DOING MORE DAMAGE.

THE ROBOT LAW AGAINST KILLING DID NOT APPLY TO OTHER ROBOTS -- AS THEY WERE JUST MACHINES. SOON ARMS, LEGS AND BROKEN ROBOTS COVERED THE FLOOR...

THE TIDE OF CONFLICT WASHED FORWARD UNTIL IT REACHED THE ROOM WHERE RICK WAS HELD...
I SEE YOU, ROBOT OF GEHRA. MY ORDERS ARE TO DESTROY YOU.

THERE'S QUITE A FREE FOR ALL GOING ON... IT'S TIME I JOINED IN... MANACLES OR NO MANACLES...

PATTI AND LEEON WERE JUST ENTERING THE FACTORY, SHIELDED BY THE BULK OF MORE INVADING ROBOTS..
RICK! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
THERE GOES GEHRA-- HE'S ESCAPING.

NOT IF I HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT. YOU HAVE A PRICE TO PAY FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE.

OU HAVE ME NOW, RANDOM -- BUT IT WON'T DO YOU ANY GOOD. AS SOON AS THE POLICE FIND OUT I HAVE BEEN KIDNAPPED, THEY WILL BE AFTER YOU. IT WILL BE JUST YOUR WORD AGAINST MINE -- AND I'M THE PRIME MINISTER!
THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, GEHRA. ROBOTS— TO THE CARS!

I GOT YOUR MESSAGE, RICK... I CAME AS FAST AS I COULD, AFTER GETTING TOGETHER ALL THESE HEAVY DUTY ROBOTS.
THANKS, LEEON. WHEN I GAVE THAT MESSAGE TO THE ROBOT TO BRING YOU HERE, HAD NO IDEA IF HE WOULD REACH YOU IN TIME.

HERE WE ARE -- THE CENTRAL VISIPHONE STATION. I'VE ORDERED THE ROBOTS TO CAPTURE IT, SO THAT WE CAN BROADCAST TO THE ENTIRE PLANET.
IT WILL DO YOU NO GOOD -- I WILL SAY NOTHING TO HELP YOU.

BUT YOU ALREADY HAVE, GEHRA. WHEN YOU FOUND RICK IN YOUR STUDY, YOU DESTROYED THE RECORDER IN THE ROBOT HE HAD USED FOR A DISGUISE. WHAT YOU DID NOT KNOW WAS THAT THE RECORDER WAS HOOKED UP TO A TRANSMITTER -- I MADE A COMPLETE DUPLICATE RECORD IN MY LABORATORY AT THE TIME!

SOON, EVERY PERSON ON ARCADIA HEARD THE DAMNING WORDS THAT GEHRA HAD SPOKEN...
. . . I KILLED PERIDEEN AFTER BIR HANNO LEFT...
INCREDIBLE.!

AFTER THE RECORDING WAS BROADCAST, LEEON MADE AN IMPASSIONED SPEECH..
SO YOU SEE THE WAR PARTY WAS MISLED, AND THE PLANNED INVASION OF EARTH IS A TERRIBLE ERROR. I ASK THAT OPERATION OMICRON BE CANCELLED AND THE PEACE PARTY BE RETURNED TO POWER..

THERE WAS NEVER DOUBT FOR AN INSTANT, AS A WAVE OF EMOTION SWEPT ARCADIA...
DOWN WITH GEHRA!
STOP THE INVASION— WE WANT ONLY PEACE!

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